Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An isolated polypeptide comprising a splice variant of an ErbB ligand with the sequence set forth in any one of SEQ ID NOS:74-84, 93, ~~95-104~~ 95, 104, ~~or 109-110~~ 109 or 110, ~~wherein~~ the splice variant of an ErbB ligand ~~is encoded by differential exon usage~~ comprising a truncated EGF domain having only the first four of the six conserved cysteines found in an intact EGF domain, ~~and~~ wherein the fourth cysteine in said truncated EGF domain is the penultimate amino acid at the C terminus of the polypeptide, wherein the N-terminal flanking sequence of said splice variant of an ErbB ligand preceding the first cysteine of the EGF domain is at least 90% homologous to the corresponding N-terminal sequence found in the known ErbB ligand from which the splice variant is derived, and wherein said splice variant of an ErbB ligand exerts inhibitory activity on ErbB receptor-mediated signaling.

2-3. (Cancelled)

4. (Previously Presented) The polypeptide according to claim 1 having the sequence set forth in any one of SEQ ID NOS: 74 to 84.

5. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) The polypeptide according to claim 1 having the sequence of any one of SEQ ID NOS: 93, ~~95-104~~ 95, 104, ~~109-110~~ 109 or 110.

6-10. (Cancelled)

11. (Previously Presented) The polypeptide of claim 1 wherein the splice variant retains binding activity to at least one member of the ErbB/EGF receptor family.

12. (Previously Presented) The polypeptide of claim 11 which retains binding activity to the receptor cells with significantly reduced biological activity compared to an equimolar concentration of at least one known agonist ligand.

13. (Cancelled) The polypeptide of claim 1 wherein the splice variant exerts inhibitory activity on at least one member of the ErbB/EGF receptor family.

14. (Currently Amended) The polypeptide of claim ~~13~~ 1 which exerts inhibitory activity to the receptor when in a 100-fold molar excess or less, to at least one known agonist ligand.

15. (Withdrawn) An isolated polynucleotide encoding a splice variant of an ErbB ligand comprising a truncated ErbB-Receptor-modulating EGF domain devoid of the C-loop of the EGF domain.

16. (Withdrawn) The polynucleotide according to claim 15 wherein the splice variant comprises a truncated receptor-modulating EGF domain comprising only the first four of the six conserved cysteines found in an intact EGF domain.

17. (Withdrawn) The polynucleotide of claim 16 wherein the fourth conserved cysteine of the encoded truncated ErbB-Receptor modulating EGF domain is the penultimate amino acid at the C terminus of the polypeptide.

18. (Withdrawn) The polynucleotide according to claim 17 comprising the sequence of any one of SEQ ID NOS:128 to 139.

19. (Withdrawn) The polynucleotide according to claim 17 having the sequence of any one of SEQ ID NOS:148 to 165.

20. (Withdrawn) The polynucleotide according to claim 16 wherein the encoded splice variant comprises a receptor-modulating EGF domain having only the first four of the six conserved cysteines found in an intact EGF domain, further comprising an amino acid sequence encoded by an alternative

exon other than the second exon encoding conserved cysteines five and six the of the intact ErbB receptor-modulating EGF domain.

21. (Withdrawn) The polynucleotide according to claim 20 having the sequence of any one of SEQ ID NOS:166-182.

22. (Withdrawn) The polynucleotide according to claim 16 wherein the splice variant comprises a receptor modulating EGF domain comprising only the first four of the six conserved cysteines found in an intact EGF domain, wherein the splice variant has at least 90% homology to the aligned amino acid sequence of the same fragment in the EGF domain of a known ErbB ligand between cysteine 1 and cysteine 4.

23. (Withdrawn) The polynucleotide of claim 22 wherein there is at least 95% homology to the aligned amino acid sequence of the same fragment in the EGF domain of a known ErbB ligand between cysteine 1 and cysteine 4.

24. (Withdrawn) The polynucleotide of claim 20 wherein the encoded N terminal flanking sequences preceding the cysteine 1 are at least 90% homologous to the same sequence in the EGF domain of a known ErbB ligand.

25. (Withdrawn) The polynucleotide of claim 15 wherein the splice variant exerts inhibitory activity to at least one member of the ErbB/EGF receptor family.

26. (Withdrawn) The polynucleotide of claim 25 which encodes a polypeptide that exerts inhibitory activity to the receptor on cells with significantly reduced biological activity compared to an equimolar amount at least one known agonist ligand.

27. (Withdrawn) An antisense oligonucleotide capable of specifically inhibiting the expression of a polypeptide according to claim 1.

28. (Withdrawn) A polynucleotide construct comprising an

isolated polynucleotide encoding the splice variants of claim 1.

29. (Withdrawn) A vector comprising the isolated polynucleotide encoding the splice variants of claim 1.

30. (Withdrawn) A host cell transformed with a polynucleotide encoding the splice variants of claim 1.

31. (Withdrawn) A host cell transformed with a polynucleotide according to claim 15.

32. (Previously Presented) A pharmaceutical composition comprising as an active ingredient a polypeptide according to claim 1.

33. (Withdrawn) A pharmaceutical composition comprising as an active ingredient a polynucleotide according to claim 15.

34. (Withdrawn) A pharmaceutical composition comprising as an active ingredient an antisense oligonucleotide according to claim 27.

35. (Withdrawn) A method of treating a disease or disorder related to an ErbB receptor in an individual in need thereof comprising administering to the individual a therapeutically effective amount of a polypeptide comprising a splice variant of an ErbB ligand encoded by differential exon usage comprising a truncated EGF domain devoid of the C-loop of the EGF domain.

36. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 35 wherein the disease or disorder is selected from a neoplastic disease, a hyperproliferative disease, angiogenesis, restenosis, wound healing, psychiatric disorders, neurological disorders and neurological injuries.

37. (Withdrawn) A method of treating a disease related to pathological activity of at least one ErbB receptor comprising administering a therapeutically effective amount of a

polynucleotide according to claim 15.

38. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 37 wherein the disease or disorder is selected from a neoplastic disease, a hyperproliferative disease, angiogenesis, restenosis, wound healing, psychiatric disorders, neurological disorders or neural injury.

39. (Withdrawn) A method for selectively enhancing or promoting the proliferation or differentiation of stem cells expressing ErbB receptors, comprising exposing the stem cells to an ErbB ligand splice variant, according to claim 1.

40. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 39 wherein the stem cells are of neural, cardiac or pancreatic lineages.

41. (Previously Presented) The polypeptide according to claim 1 having the sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO:81.

42. (New) An isolated polypeptide comprising a splice variant of an ErbB ligand consisting of a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NOS:74-84, 93, 95, 104, 109 or 110, the splice variant of an ErbB ligand comprising a truncated EGF domain having only the first four of the six conserved cysteines found in an intact EGF domain, wherein the fourth cysteine in said truncated EGF domain is the penultimate amino acid at the C terminus of the polypeptide, and wherein said splice variant of an ErbB ligand exerts inhibitory activity on ErbB receptor-mediated signaling.